
CONSIDERATIONS, &c.

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CONSIDERATIONS

RESPECTING THE

Volunteer Corps

TO BE RAISED BY

THE EAST-INDIA COMPANY;

ADDRESSED TO THE

PROPRIETORS

OF

EAST-INDIA STOCK.

LONDON:

PRINTED BY WILLIAM LANE,

AT THE

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NEAR THE EAST INDIA HOUSE.

LEADENHALL-STREET.



[PRICE SIXPENCE,]

CONSIDERATIONS

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TO BE RAISED BY

THE EAST-INDIA COMPANY

APPROPRIATE TO THE

PROPRIETORS

OF

EAST-INDIA STOCK

LONDON

PRINTED BY WILLIAM LANE

AT THE

PRINTING OFFICE

IN THE EAST-INDIA HOUSE

15, MARK LANE

—1800—

[PRINTED BY WILLIAM LANE]

CONSIDERATIONS
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EAST INDIA COMPANY;
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PERHAPS the cordial and unanimous approbation, with which the proposal for raising the Volunteer Corps was received at the last General Court, may appear to render any remarks on the subject unnecessary.

But

But although many gentlemen then present did, with a zeal highly honorable to them, press for an immediate determination, great credit is due to the Chairman, and the other respectable Proprietors, who recommended delay, for the purpose of mature consideration: Why should a hasty decision afford the only possible ground for cavil, upon a plan of such utility?

The necessity of the measure was ably enforced from behind the bar, and indeed that necessity has long been apparent. It appears by the papers laid before the General Court, that in the year 1794, the Court of Directors had then in contemplation a proposition for this purpose; and indeed to that may be traced the origin of the present plan, matured as it is by the
Court's

Court's consideration. But doubts seem to arise respecting its legality.

To solve these doubts reference must be had to the Act of the 33d of his present Majesty, cap. 52, which appropriates all the Company's profits in Great Britain to certain purposes therein specified, after providing for the payment of Bills of Exchange, and *current payments of other debts, interest, and other outgoings, charges, and expences, &c.*

The expence of defending the immense property in the Company's warehouses, upon the preservation of which depends the Dividend of the Proprietors, has ever been considered as being comprehended among the necessary "*outgoings, charges, and expences,*" alluded to

to in the act. The warehouses, as I am informed, ever have been guarded, and by men with fire arms.

The Act of Parliament above mentioned, with a view to prevent a profuse increase in the Company's "outgoings, charges, and expences," *imposes an obligation, that no new or additional establishments of officers or servants shall be created without the concurrence of the Commissioners for the affairs of India.*

If therefore the plan in question be deemed a New Establishment, the General Court are competent to confirm it, with the concurrence of the Commissioners.

This was the case with the late Army Arrangement for India, which, although it added to the Company's expences the large sum of £400,000 per annum was deemed a
necessary

necessary "Outgoing," and no one ever thought of questioning the legality of the measure.

That measure, and this now about to be adopted, are founded on the same principle, viz. a change of circumstances rendering an increased expence necessary for defending possessions and property.

The difference is merely this: That the object of defence in India requires an additional annual charge of not less than £ 400,000 while the object of defence in England requires an additional annual charge (after the first year) of £ 4,000 at the utmost. For this trifling sum, a tenth part of what it costs the nation for raising a regiment, a Corps of the Company's servants, consisting of 1000 men, will be compleated, all of whom are real Volunteers,

lunteers, Officer'd by their immediate superiors in your employ, to whom they are in habits of paying a degree of attention beyond the mere discipline of bought service ; and commanded in the higher ranks by gentlemen possessing a stake in the property they are to defend, and whom you have selected for the management of your important concerns.

It is said, that, in compliance with the desire of some gentlemen among the Proprietary, the Court of Directors mean to take the opinions of counsel as to the legality of the measure in question. Whatever those opinions may be, it is not unfair to say, with all the deference due to the gentlemen of the long Robe, that this is not a case in which they ought to have any great influence with the General Court.

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If (as I suppose they will) their opinions confirm the legality of the measure, it will certainly be satisfactory to know, that, in order to do what is right and proper, it is not necessary to repeal or amend any existing Act of Parliament.

But if these opinions should differ—(and that would not be surprising when we advert to the difference between eminent legal opinions as to the remuneration to Mr. Hastings)—if they should differ, I say, perhaps the General Court may, as they did upon that occasion, be guided by their own opinion, in doing what they think right.

Indeed no very good reason appears against their so doing, if even all the legal opinions should be against them.

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The law upon this occasion is to be expounded by those, who, on behalf of the Public, are the guardians of the Company's purse: and the General Court would be countenanced by the example of Ministers of State, in claiming an indemnity for infringing the letter of the Law for the public service.

Circumstances having rendered it prudent to guard your warehouses by an increased number of men trained to arms; and the proper and constitutional jealousy of Government preventing measures of the kind, necessary on the present occasion, being taken by any association of individuals not amenable to martial law, I apprehend, it became requisite to constitute the Corps as now formed.

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It is true that, when raised, it must be put upon a footing nearly similar to that of other Volunteer Corps. Let it be so.—What is the motive of every individual who enrolls himself in a Volunteer Corps?—To defend himself and his property by defending his country. He does not guard his house by waiting at the door to receive a foreign or a domestic enemy. Prudence unites with patriotism in recurring to one of the first principles of Society,—the association of individuals for defence against powerful aggression.

Will then the East-India Company, who have built ships of war, who have furnished seamen, who have ever been the first to volunteer in the service of the State,—will they shrink from the example of humble individuals?

individuals? Will they not go forth to destroy insurrection and tumult in the bud? or will they stand sullenly within their warehouse gates, till overwhelmed by the gathering storm which they might have dispersed, all they have left is the wretched satisfaction of falling the last?

But let us hear no more of legal obstacles to a Plan, which, in the language applied upon another occasion by a celebrated speaker at the General Courts, is “to support the Constitution, the parent of all law: and its tendency is to avert that tremendous situation, when the suspension of all laws may be necessary, to invigorate the exertions of the country against an invading enemy.”

Let the Proprietors confirm the Volunteer Plan; and let the Government of the Country consider

consider of the most proper mode of carrying it into effect. But, above all, let your decision be *unanimous*: and let the East-India Company be the first to set an example of prompt and ready attention to the earnest recommendation in the late Speech from the Throne, “ That nothing can so much contribute to the desirable event of a Peace, as manifesting a determination and resources to oppose, with increased activity and energy, the further efforts of those with whom we have to contend.”

A PROPRIETOR.

London, Oct. 12, 1796.

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